



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Mitt Romney, Governor ♦ Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor ♦ Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

DHCD Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendment: 2003-01

Program: HCVP

Effective Date: February 12, 2003

Purpose: This amendment modifies DHCD's policy on the voucher term and extensions.

In Section 4. Issuing and Leasing, delete sections 4.1.1 through 4.1.3.3 in its entirety and replace with the following:

4.1.1 Initial Term

The initial term of the voucher is 60 days.

Alternatively, an RAA may initially give the family the full 120 days provided the RAA sends two reminders to the applicant regarding the expiration date of the subsidy. The reminders should be sent at approximately 55 days and again at 90 days.

4.1.2 Extensions of Initial Term

If only 60 days are granted initially, the RAA will grant a family one 60-day extension upon written request.

4.1.3 Extensions Beyond 120 Days

Efforts must be made to obtain housing search assistance for an applicant that requires an extension beyond 120 days. On a case-by-case basis, RAAs may extend the cumulative voucher term beyond 120 days to provide a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

A one-time extension of 60 days may be granted for other good cause as determined by the RAA provided the family submits a detailed housing log showing that they are engaged in a diligent housing search in 3 different cities or towns and have submitted at least 1 RFTA in the first 120 days.

Other good cause may include but is not limited to the following:

- Applicant has been unable to find a unit for reasons related to a domestic violence situation;
- Applicant is in a homeless shelter and despite diligent search efforts has been unable to find a unit; or,
- Applicant has recently obtained housing search assistance and is likely to find a unit if one more extension is granted.

4.1.3.1 Procedure

Extension requests must be submitted to the RAA in writing by the expiration date unless the applicant can demonstrate that mitigating circumstances prevented the request from being filed on time. Extension requests beyond 180 days must be supported by a documented housing search effort. Applicant documentation of diligent search efforts must be acceptable to the RAA. For reasonable accommodation cases, the documentation must demonstrate that the applicant was unable to find housing as a result of their disability.

To ensure consistency, each RAA must designate one person in a supervisory position who will be responsible for reviewing and making decisions on all requests.

Decisions on extensions are not subject to informal reviews or hearings and cannot be appealed to DHCD.

Progress report requirement

At any time during the extended term the RAA may require the family to report its progress in leasing a unit. At a minimum, the report should indicate where the family looked for a unit and why it was rejected.

RAAs are encouraged to require a progress report for all extensions beyond 60 days, particularly where the family is "hard-to-house" or has self-identified as having a disability. Review of a family's progress report will provide the RAA with evidence of a diligent housing search and will facilitate review of any future requests for extension by the family. A family's progress report may also be used proactively to reveal situations of possible discrimination where a family is repeatedly denied housing.